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U.S. Department of Justice
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Office for Victims of Crime

Gaining Insight, Taking Action

Basic Skills for Serving Victims

A compilation of three OVC videos and guidebooks originally produced for the 2005 National Victim Assistance Academy:

Listen to My Story: Communicating With Victims of Crime
Meeting the Needs of Underserved Victims
Substance Abuse and Victimization

Innovation • Partnerships
Safer Neighborhoods

Office for Victims of Crime
OVC
"Putting Victims First"

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The content of this document is based on text developed for three guides in 2005 by the Victims' Assistance Legal Organization under grant number 95–MU–GX–K002, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this document are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP), headed by Assistant Attorney General Laurie O. Robinson, provides federal leadership in developing the Nation's capacity to prevent and control crime, administer justice, and assist victims. OJP has seven components: the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the National Institute of Justice; the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; the Office for Victims of Crime; the Community Capacity Development Office; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking. More information about OJP can be found at www.ojp.gov.

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Contents

Introduction 1

Facilitator Tips 3

Listen to My Story: Communicating With Victims of Crime 7

Segment One: Helping Victims Regain Control 7
Segment Two: Listening With Compassion 9
Segment Three: Understanding the Impact of Trauma 12
Segment Four: Building Trust 14
Segment Five: Becoming Aware of Communication Barriers 16
Additional Resources 19
Additional Tips 21

Meeting the Needs of Underserved Victims 29

Segment One: Creating Services for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Community ... 30
Segment Two: Providing Services to Isolated Crime Victims 33
Segment Three: Bringing Hope to Urban Communities 37
Segment Four: Empowering Immigrant Women To Speak Out 42
Segment Five: Reaching Out to Crime Victims With Disabilities 47
Segment Six: Providing Services to Victims of Hate and Bias Crimes 51
Segment Seven: Reaching Out to Victims of Financial Crimes 54
Additional Resources 57

Substance Abuse and Victimization 69

Segment One: Relationship Between Substance Abuse and Victimization 69
Segment Two: Techniques for Assisting Victims Who Abuse Drugs or Alcohol 73
Segment Three: Importance of Collaboration in Assisting Victims With Substance Abuse Issues 77
Additional Resources 79

Gaining Insight, Taking Action
Basic Skills for Serving Victims

Discussion Guide

This product was compiled from three OVC videos and guidebooks previously published as part of the 2005 National Victim Assistance Academy curriculum:

Listen to My Story: Communicating With Victims of Crime
Video produced by Video/Action for the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice

Meeting the Needs of Underserved Victims
Video produced by Video/Action for the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice

Substance Abuse and Victimization
Video produced by Greg Luft, Colorado State University, for the Office for Victims of Crime, U.S. Department of Justice

Guidebooks for each of these videos were written by Melissa Hook, Victims' Assistance Legal Organization, McLean, VA; Morna Murray, Victims' Assistance Legal Organization, McLean, VA; and Anne Seymour, Justice Solutions, Washington, DC. The content has been updated and enhanced with new tools and resources since the guides were originally published in 2005.

Introduction

Gaining Insight, Taking Action: Basic Skills for Serving Victims consists of a consolidated DVD and discussion guide produced by OVC to provide broader accessibility to three popular videos and companion guides that were originally released as part of the 2005 National Victim Assistance Academy* curriculum. Now with updated resources and a contemporary format, the DVD and guide remain valuable training tools for a broad range of service providers, criminal and juvenile justice professionals, mental health providers, legal advocates, and other audiences who want to better understand how to communicate effectively with crime victims, the challenges faced by underserved victim populations, and the relationship between substance abuse and victimization.

The three original videos and guidebooks include—

- *Listen to My Story: Communicating With Victims of Crime*, which covers the basics of communicating with traumatized crime victims in five segments, thus exploring the potential effects of crime on the emotional and psychological well-being of victims. Subjects include how to listen compassionately and how to build trust between victim and service provider.
- *Meeting the Needs of Underserved Victims* delves into the challenges faced by underserved victim populations in accessing comprehensive and effective victim services in seven topical segments. These groups include victims with various types of disabilities, victims in isolated communities, inner-city youth, female migrant workers, and victims of hate crimes.
- *Substance Abuse and Victimization* offers insights into the previctimization and postvictimization correlations between substance abuse and victimization, covering victims who may turn to drugs or alcohol after a crime or whose vulnerability to victimization may have been increased by their own use of drugs or alcohol. The information is presented in three segments, including the importance of collaboration in assisting these victims.

**For more information about the National Victim Assistance Academy, visit OVC's Training and Technical Assistance Center at www.ovcttac.gov.*

Facilitator Tips

You can view the material on this DVD in its entirety or in segments—whichever best suits the needs of your audience. To facilitate discussion of each segment, turn to the corresponding section in this discussion guide. Each section offers a framework for moderating a discussion by providing you with questions and "probes"—possible responses to each question that are based on research on victim trauma and needs—to help initiate discussion about the issues raised in the segment.

Depending on the size and composition of the group and the venue, you may want to—

- Develop viewer worksheets—using the discussion questions—to encourage individuals to reflect on the issues addressed in the videos.
- Provide opportunities for viewers to apply the issues raised by the videos to their own experiences, either as crime victims or as professionals who work with crime victims.
- Divide viewers into small groups to discuss their ideas and opinions and encourage them to share insights with the whole group.
- Document key points of group discussions on tear sheets to offer a visual summary of the proceedings.

The recommendations in the discussion guide and DVD are by no means all inclusive; rather, they are intended to promote further dialog among viewers about how service providers can best serve the needs of victims.

As you progress through the guide, take special note of the Additional Resources produced since the original videos and guides were released in 2005. All are available through the National Criminal Justice Reference Service for a nominal shipping and handling fee. OVC's Web site (www.ovc.gov) offers previews of these materials as well as ordering information in the "Library & Multimedia" section.

Use this DVD and discussion guide for—

- Introductory training in basic skills for new staff (including volunteers).
- Continuing education and "refreshers" for more experienced staff.
- Professional training for victim service providers, criminal and juvenile justice professionals, advocates, and allied professionals, such as State Victim Assistance Academies.
- Public awareness efforts to increase understanding of victimization and victims' rights and needs.

Suggested Materials

- DVD player and monitor.
- Viewer worksheets.
- Tear sheet pads and easel.
- Markers.
- Masking tape.

Note that victim awareness programs that seek to help offenders better understand the impact of crime on victims may find the substance abuse-related video useful as well.

Listen to My Story: Communicating With Victims of Crime

Listen to My Story: Communicating With Victims of Crime
Meeting the Needs of Underserved Victims
Substance Abuse and Victimization

Listen to My Story: Communicating With Victims of Crime

Listen to My Story offers insights into the basics of communicating with victims of crime. While compassion and empathy are key, effective interaction with victims requires more than excellent communication skills. You should keep many other considerations in mind, such as how you may unintentionally convey messages, through body language and other subtle means, that are actually harmful. Cultural considerations also are important. What is viewed as respectful and inviting in one culture may mean the opposite in another.

Listen to My Story covers the basics of communicating with traumatized crime victims, thus exploring the potential effects of crime on the emotional and psychological well-being of victims. All crimes are potentially traumatic, and you should be aware of the broad range of potential responses to them. It is also important to be knowledgeable about the mental health implications and considerations involved in communicating with trauma victims.

This 13½-minute video focuses on five areas:

- Helping crime victims regain control.
- Listening with compassion.
- Understanding the impact of trauma on victims.
- Building trust when communicating with victims.
- Understanding the barriers to communication.

Segment One: Helping Victims Regain Control

Being victimized can turn every aspect of a crime victim's life into chaos. After a crime, victims most commonly feel a loss of control. Because they had no control over their victimization, victims may start feeling helpless in other areas of their lives. It is very important for victims to begin to regain the sense that they are, indeed, in control of their lives. This segment will help you understand—

- The feelings of helplessness and loss of control that individuals experience after being victimized.

- How to support crime victims as they struggle to regain a sense of control over their lives.
- Behavior on the part of service providers that can inhibit crime victims' efforts to regain a sense of control and begin to heal.

1. What fundamental values and beliefs can be thrown into question or destroyed after a violent victimization?

Facilitator Probes

- Bad things do not happen to good people.
- Personal safety is a "given" in a just society.
- Life is predictable and fair.

2. What can you do to help victims restore a sense of control over their lives?

Facilitator Probes

- Let victims decide when and where they want to talk.
- Listen to victims' stories with patience and respect.
- Listen actively and be aware of victims' state of mind and the message behind the words they use to describe their situations.
- Express confidence in victims' abilities to tell their stories.
- Have a list of mental health and trauma referrals readily accessible. It would be helpful to have brochures with this information. On request, help victims make contact with the referrals.
- Be prepared for the fact that victims may have little sense of the workings of the criminal justice system and may be intimidated or confused by it.
- Provide as much information as possible to victims about how an investigation will proceed.
- Try to give victims the appropriate information to help them make their own decisions if making decisions is an important part of reclaiming their lives.

3. How might you inhibit effective communication with victims of violent crime and their ability to regain a sense of control over their lives?

Facilitator Probes

- Render judgments or imply that victims were in some way to blame for a crime.
- Second-guess victims' feelings or responses to a crime.
- Compare victims' experiences of crime with those of other victims of similar crimes.
- Argue with victims or become flustered by their anxieties.
- Treat victims as evidence.
- Dismiss victims' fears and anxieties as unrealistic or obsessive.
- Treat victims as if they are helpless.

Segment Two: Listening With Compassion

Listening to crime victims is perhaps the most important thing that you do; it is crucial to listen to them with compassion. Compassionate listening conveys a genuine sense of caring and encourages victims to speak openly and freely. Voice tone, words, facial expressions, body language, and quality of attention all affect whether victims sense they are being heard. Be conscious of the kinds of messages—both verbal and nonverbal—you are conveying, whether in person or over the telephone. This segment will help you understand—

- The importance of body language and the messages it conveys.
- Positive and negative conversational skills.
- Conveying interest and compassion in telephone conversations.

1. What kinds of body language convey openness and compassion?

Facilitator Probes (positive body language)

- Maintain eye contact to show interest, unless it is culturally inappropriate. When culturally appropriate behavior is in question, ask in a gentle and respectful way what is comfortable for that victim.
- Use appropriate posture that conveys a relaxed but alert attitude.
- Lean slightly forward to show interest.
- Practice an awareness of other nonverbal messages conveyed by use of arms, hands, and facial expressions.

Facilitator Probes (negative body language)

- Use facial expressions or body language that show impatience when victims are repetitive.
- Slouch.
- Look around the room when they are talking.
- Yawn, sigh, and otherwise convey boredom or disinterest.
- Multitask while they are speaking.

2. How can conversational skills convey a willingness to understand and show compassion?

Facilitator Probes (positive skills)

- Speak in a measured, kind voice.
- Paraphrase to convey compassionate interest in victims' stories and assurance that they are being heard.
- Paraphrase victims' stories to confirm that they have been accurately understood.
- Paraphrase victims' stories as a way to validate feelings.

- Ask open questions that do not require a "yes" or "no" answer (e.g., instead of asking "Has this been going on for a long time?" ask "How long has this been going on?").
- Use active listening skills that acknowledge victims' emotional and psychological states of mind (e.g., "That must have made you feel . . .," "It sounds like you are really feeling . . .").
- Respond to content, paraphrasing when appropriate (e.g., "So, it is really important to you that . . .," "You are really concerned about . . .," "In other words . . .").
- Remain engaged until victims have finished telling their stories.

Facilitator Probes (negative skills)

- Direct victims rather than letting them tell their stories.
- Interrupt victims.
- Tell victims how they should feel.
- Disagree with victims.
- Display a tendency to evaluate what they are saying.
- Jump to conclusions or fill in details.
- Use vocabulary that is poorly understood or alienating.
- Talk too much.
- Know all the answers.
- Be close-minded.
- Ask "Why did you…?" or "Why didn't you…?" or other questions that convey blame.

3. In telephone conversations, how can you convey compassion and a willingness to help?

Facilitator Probes

- Use first names.
- Speak with warmth and interest.
- Make victims aware of your willingness to listen to their entire story.
- Listen carefully to assess victims' state of mind and let them know if they sound depressed, upset, or angry to help them clarify their feelings.
- Let victims know that expressions of grief or anger are okay.
- Explore with victims the problem or crime that provoked the call.

Segment Three: Understanding the Impact of Trauma

Victims can experience a number of traumatic reactions to victimization. When victims report or exhibit signs of ongoing mental health trauma, victim service providers are often the first to provide referrals to mental health experts. Even though you may not be a mental health expert, you should understand the most common short- and long-term effects of crime on victims' mental health. You also should have on hand referrals to experts who understand trauma in the context of victimization. This segment will help you to understand—

- Immediate and short- and long-term trauma reactions after victimization.
- The kind of support necessary for victims who are coping with trauma.

1. What are some of the immediate effects of victimization?

Facilitator Probes

- Shock, surprise, and terror.
- Feelings of unreality, such as "This can't be happening to me."
- Extremely high rates of physiological anxiety (e.g., rapid heart rate, hyperventilation, stomach distress).

- A sense of helplessness.

2. What are some of the short-term effects of victimization?

Facilitator Probes

- Preoccupation with the crime (e.g., "I can't get it out of my mind").
- Flashbacks and bad dreams.
- Heightened concern for personal safety.
- Heightened concern for the safety of loved ones.
- Fear that they are at fault.
- Fear that they will not be believed.
- Fear that they will be blamed.
- Fear of law enforcement if they belong to a culture that, in general, has a difficult relationship with law enforcement.
- Inability to trust anyone or any situation.
- Fear of the next attack, if they are a victim of repeated abuse.

3. What are some of the long-term effects of victimization?

Facilitator Probes

- Posttraumatic stress disorder.
- Depression.
- Alcoholism and substance abuse.
- Mental illness.
- Suicide or contemplation of suicide.
- Panic disorders.
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder.

- Poor health as a result of the victimization (e.g., physical disabilities, sexually transmitted diseases, immune system problems, developmental disabilities from a head injury).
- Chronic pain.
- Sexual dysfunction.

4. What can you do or say to help victims cope with the trauma they experience as a result of a violent crime? (Recognize that eliminating trauma-related psychological injuries may not be a realistic goal.)

Facilitator Probes

- Be calm and focused.
- Express sorrow for what has happened to them.
- Conduct a basic needs assessment to determine the degree of trauma victims may be experiencing. Remember that not all victims are alike. For each assessment, include previctimization characteristics, prior mental health conditions, and postvictimization factors, particularly the degree of exposure to the criminal justice system and the quality of social support.
- Be understanding when victims do not wish to repeat the details of the crime.
- Be understanding if victims do not wish to look at defendants in court and arrange for someone to be present to lend moral support.
- Refer victims to stress management and mental health professionals based on their needs.
- Receive training on red flag indicators for substance abuse and alcohol addiction that may develop as a result of victimization and make appropriate referrals.

Segment Four: Building Trust

Many victims report that their trust in the world as a safe place is shattered as a result of a victimization. If individuals are victimized due to gender or because they identify with a particular religious, ethnic, or other group, this loss of trust

can be profound. One of your tasks is to help victims move forward and start to reclaim the trust they have lost. One of the best ways you can achieve this is by being trustworthy in every aspect of your work with victims. This segment will help you understand—

- The loss of the sense of safety and trust that victims experience.
- What you can do to help victims regain their sense of trust and safety.

1. What are some of the reasons that it may be difficult to establish trusting relationships with crime victims?

Facilitator Probes

- Victims' fundamental assumptions about life may have been shattered, and therefore they may have difficulty identifying who they can believe and trust.
- They may belong to a different culture.
- They may speak a different language.
- Victims of hate and bias crimes may feel persecuted and expect repeat victimizations.
- They may not trust anyone they perceive as a representative of the criminal justice system.
- Their previous experiences with the criminal justice system may have been unsatisfactory.
- They may have concerns about their rights to confidentiality.
- They may believe that people in the system will try to blame them.
- They may be angry.
- They may feel guilty.

2. What can you say or do to help build trust?

Facilitator Probes

- Express sorrow for what happened.

- Be clear in communicating that it was not the victims' fault that they were victimized.
- Explain your specific role and how you can help them. Do not make promises to victims that cannot be kept.
- Explain the specific rules of privilege that may apply to communications with victims (e.g., disclosure requirements versus confidential communication between advocates and victims).
- Know the state laws and agency rules about confidentiality and abide by them.
- Explain the criminal justice process as it relates to victims.
- Explain the purpose behind the questions you are asking.
- Explain to victims what their options are in reporting a crime and participating in the process.
- Be sensitive to victims' mental health and medical needs and make appropriate referrals.
- Explain victim compensation and help victims apply for it if they are eligible.
- If victims feel alienated as a result of age, culture, race, religion, gender, or sexual preference, partner with a representative from the relevant community to improve the quality of victim assistance.

Segment Five: Becoming Aware of Communication Barriers

You must do everything in your power to become aware of and overcome any communication barriers that might exist in your relationships with crime victims. Barriers include cultural differences, programmatic barriers such as lack of adequate training, and physical barriers such as the distances some victims must travel to access services. This segment will help you understand—

- Cultural barriers to effective communication with victims.
- Programmatic barriers to effective communication with victims.
- Physical barriers to effective communication with victims.

1. What cultural barriers might impede good communication with crime victims?

Facilitator Probes

- The role of family (e.g., sharing intimate information about a crime may be frowned on in certain cultures).
- Cultural mores that emphasize loyalty to a group over an individual.
- Cultural indications of shame with respect to victims.
- Variations among cultures in the grieving process.
- Prejudice, either conscious or unconscious, on the part of helping individuals.
- Victims' perception of what will be held private and what must be shared with law enforcement officials.
- Distrust of the criminal justice system because of culture or experiences that members of a culture have had with the criminal justice system.
- Fear of deportation.
- Poor understanding of your role.
- Poor understanding of victims' rights or the criminal justice process.
- Culture of gender-based passivity.
- Fear of law enforcement.
- Religious beliefs.
- Disenfranchisement for various reasons (e.g., extreme poverty, illness, isolation).

2. What programmatic barriers might impede good communication with crime victims?

Facilitator Probes

- False assumption that you have qualities or attitudes in common with victims.
- Lack of diversity among victim services staff.

- Language barriers.
- Absence of outreach to different groups about victims' rights and services.
- Prejudice.
- Lack of the necessary training to prepare you to address the needs of the populations served.
- Lack of cultural competency.

3. What are some of the physical barriers that might impede good communication with crime victims?

Facilitator Probes

- Location of services.
- Long distances victims need to travel to access services in rural areas.
- Victims' isolation and lack of awareness of services for crime victims.
- Victims' lack of transportation.
- Victims' lack of a telephone or computer.
- Poor access for people with disabilities.
- Older victims who are dependent on others for access to services.
- Child victims who are dependent on others for access to services.

4. What efforts can you make to address barriers that impede communication with crime victims?

Facilitator Probes

- Participate in diversity training.
- Identify populations in the community that are challenging to serve.
- Assess the general needs of victims from populations in the community that are challenging to serve.

- Evaluate staff's cultural competence for assisting underserved victim groups
- Determine ways in which agency policy can change to better serve target groups.
- Develop a culturally diverse staff.
- Form partnerships with culturally diverse individuals and engage their assistance in serving victims from their communities.

Additional Resources

Training and Other Specific Guidance

VAT *Online* is a Web-based training program developed by OVC to provide service providers and allied professionals the opportunity to acquire the basic skills and knowledge needed to better assist victims of crime. Lessons of special interest to those interested in learning more about effective communications with victims include two Core Skills lessons—"Introduction to Communication" and "Engaging Clients and Establishing Rapport"—and an Issues lesson—"Helping Clients with Traumatic Experiences."

For more information and to register for free VAT *Online* training, visit the OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center at https://www.ovcttac.gov/trainingCenter/index.cfn. OVC-sponsored workshops, conferences, and other training opportunities, including scholarships, also can be found here.

Web Sites

Active Listening Skills, Academic Resource Center, Utah State University
www.usu.edu/arc/idea_sheets/pdf/active_listening.pdf

Communication Skills, New York State Governor's Office of Employee Relations
http://goer.state.ny.us/Training_Development/Online_Learning/FTMS/600s8.asp

Homicide Support Project, Virginia Mason Medical Center, Seattle, WA
https://www.virginiamason.org/home/body.cfm?id=570

International Online Training Program on Intractable Conflict, Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado
www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/treatment/activel.htm

National Crime Victims Research and Treatment Center, Medical University of South Carolina
www.musc.edu/cvc

National MultiCultural Institute
www.nmci.org

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Office for Victims of Crime. 2008. *First Response to Victims of Crime.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime. www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/publications/infores/other.htm#firstresponse (Companion DVD to training guide listed above.)

Office for Victims of Crime, 2008. *VICTIM IMPACT: Listen and Learn.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime.

Resources for Active Listening

Active Listening, Study Guides and Strategies, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota. www.studygs.net/listening.htm

Active Listening Resources for Educators. http://7-12educators.about.com/cs/activelistening

Active Listening Skills, Academic Resource Center, Utah State University. www.usu.edu/arc/idea_sheets/pdf/active_listening.pdf

Additional Tips

Guidelines for Active Listening

Active listening is a structured form of listening and responding that conveys empathy, focused attention, and understanding. It involves listening not only with the ears, but also with the eyes and other senses, and it involves an awareness of body language. Active listening has several benefits:

- People are obliged to listen attentively to what others are saying.
- Paraphrasing to confirm what has been said helps avoid misunderstandings.
- Paraphrasing to validate feelings helps create an open environment for exchange.

Several communication techniques come into play in active listening:

- **Asking open questions.** Rather than ask questions that require only a "yes" or "no" answer, ask open questions. For example, instead of saying "Has this

been going on a long time?" ask "How long has this been going on?" That way, instead of closing the conversation with a "yes" or "no" response, individuals are encouraged to keep talking.

- **Paraphrasing.** It helps to show that you have been listening attentively and accurately understand what has been said. For example, if a victim tells you about an abusive relationship that she does not know how to end, you might paraphrase this as, "You're being treated terribly by your partner but you are afraid to leave."

- **Reflecting.** Repeating back a word or phrase can encourage people to go on. If a victim says "It's been really difficult recently," keep the conversation going simply by repeating the word "Difficult . . . ."

- **Clarifying.** Everyone skirts around or glosses over the most difficult situations and emotions. They will avoid discussing them if allowed. If a victim glosses over an important point, help him or her to clarify it by saying, "Tell me more about . . ." or ". . . sounds like a difficult area for you."

- **Using short words of encouragement.** Saying "yes," "go on," or "I see" can give some much-needed encouragement.

- **Reacting.** Sympathy and understanding are vital. Saying, for example, "That must have been difficult," can help a person feel he or she is being understood.

Source: Adapted from "Active Listening," Change Our Minds awareness campaign, Samaritans, Surrey, England.

Telephone Communications: Responding to Difficult Questions

The following examples of telephone call exchanges between victim and listener/responder may be useful in checking your way of responding to victims.

Some "Do's" and "Don'ts" When Communicating With Victims

Do

- Attempt foremost to communicate trust, support, and confidence.

- Calm and comfort victims. Ask "How are you doing?"

Victim	Listener/Responder
Can you help me?	I'd like to try. Can you tell me more about your situa tion and we'll see what we can do.
Tell me more about what that means.	Perhaps it will become clearer as we discuss the reasons why you called.
What should I do about my problem?	What do you feel is possible for you to do at this time?
I want you to help me make a decision. That's why I called.	I'd like to be helpful to you. Which of the things we've discussed do you feel most comfortable in carrying out?
Everyone so far has treated me like a dog.	I'm so sorry you feel you've been treated badly. I'm going to try my best to help you in a respectful way.
I hope you have a couple of hours to talk to me.	I wish I did. Right now I have [amount of time]. Let's try and identify your major needs and concerns, and see if we can address them in this time. Otherwise, we can reschedule when we both have more time.
That [allied professional] is an idiot!	I'm sorry you had such a bad experience. Let's talk about what happened and see if I can help you solve your problem.
Can you guarantee [this] will happen?	I'm sorry, I can't guarantee anything. However, I can work closely with you to see if we can help make it happen.
Do I have to tell you who I am?	Only if you decide to do so.
You seem so factual and objective. Do you really care what happens to me?	Yes, I do.
How can you care about a stranger, someone you've never met?	If you share your personal concerns with me, I don't feel you are a stranger.
You don't care!	Why do you feel that way? Perhaps if we talk more about the reason you've called, you'll be better able to judge.

- Allow victims time to tell what happened and describe how they are feeling in their own words.
- Give victims back the control an offender took away by letting them decide when and where to talk.
- Reassure them that their feelings are quite normal and natural, even though they may seem a bit unusual at the moment.
- Let victims know that any feelings of anger, distress, frustration, fear, and the like are not uncommon and are justifiable.

- Be willing to listen to victims share their experiences if they want to talk about a crime and its effects, and validate that experience with empathy and support.
- Be alert for hidden meanings and messages not directly expressed by victims, without making unwarranted assumptions.
- Be encouraging, but not unrealistic.
- Be alert for opportunities to stress victims' qualities and strengths, but do not patronize.
- Accept the fact that you may never know whether victims follow through with your recommendations.
- Have an information and referral system—with names, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and Web sites—to determine appropriate referrals.
- Offer to make referral calls.
- Ask for assistance from a supervisor if a call appears to be too difficult to handle yourself.
- Recognize that mistakes will be made and that improved communication skills come from learning from your mistakes.
- Understand that many victims will face extreme difficulties in reconstructing their lives after a violent crime, and that some may never recover from the tragedy.

Don't

- Be judgmental or blame victims for the crimes that were committed against them.
- Second-guess how victims have reacted to a crime, either at the time it was occurring or in its aftermath.
- Avoid victims or avoid listening to their reactions to a crime. Listening and validating those experiences and emotions are critical to victims' reconstruction after a crime.

- Try to compare victims' experiences with similar ones, including your own. It is essential to individualize each victim, each crime, and each victim's reaction to that crime.
- Be "overly helpful" by making decisions and choices for victims. Because individuals do not choose to be victimized or have control over a violent act committed against them, their ability to regain control over and make decisions affecting their lives becomes extremely important.
- Be discouraged if you feel a call has been unsuccessful. You are not expected to "solve" most problems with a single phone call.
- Be afraid of silence. Use it constructively. Do not talk more than the victim.
- Become flustered by victims' anxiety or urgency. One of the most important factors is that you must remain calm, even in a crisis. Remember that your anxiety also can easily be transmitted over the telephone.
- "Take sides" with victims who have difficult experiences with the criminal or juvenile justice system. Work to solve problems and assure victims that you will do your best to address their identified needs. Avoid "trash talk" about allied professionals at all costs.
- Become defensive or arrogant or argue with victims.
- Expect to be a psychotherapist or to know all the "right" answers. Your job is to listen and help victims—to the degree possible—in handling their immediate issues.

Sources: Kaufman-Yavitz, Louise. 1982. "Some Common Do's and Don'ts." Training materials. St. Louis, MO; Seymour, Anne. 1998. "Do's and Don'ts in Supporting Victims of Crime." Unpublished; and Stout, Ed. n.d. "Victim First Aid." St. Louis, MO: Aid for Victims of Crime. Information also was gathered from unpublished material written by Louise Kaufman-Yavitz, Anne Seymour, and Ed Stout.

Meeting the Needs of Underserved Victims

Meeting the Needs of Underserved Victims

Meeting the Needs of Underserved Victims delves into the challenges faced by underserved victim populations in accessing comprehensive and effective victim services and service providers after a crime.

Many crime victims are underserved. They often do not receive services and support that can fully meet their physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial needs. Meeting victims' needs is far more difficult when their access to rights and services is complicated by factors such as ethnicity, geographic isolation, language barriers, cultural intolerance, disability, and lack of appropriate social support. Generally, victims have legislatively protected rights to be present and heard at all stages of the criminal justice process—rights that underserved victims may not know about, understand, or act on. Thus, victims can be doubly underserved. No universal formula to meet the needs of all underserved populations exists, because each group is unique. Yet, you can improve response protocols by looking carefully at specific populations and asking victims for feedback.

This 13-minute video features discussions with five victims who represent the following underserved populations in the United States:

- People who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- People living in isolated/rural communities.
- Inner-city youth.
- Female migrant workers.
- Individuals with disabilities.

The interviewees discuss their personal experiences with crime and their short- and long-term needs and concerns. They make suggestions about how the criminal justice system can improve its responses to lessen victims' trauma. The discussion guide contains questions and discussion points for two additional underserved victim populations who are not featured in the video: victims of hate and bias crimes and financial crimes.

Segment One: Creating Services for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Community

Victims who are deaf or hard-of-hearing need service providers with whom they can communicate effectively in the aftermath of crime. To explain their needs and understand their rights, these victims may require skilled interpreters at virtually every stage of the criminal or juvenile justice process. You should be familiar with the kinds of challenges that deaf and hard-of-hearing victims may encounter after being victimized. Reach out to and collaborate with allied professionals in the deaf and hard-of-hearing community to ensure that victims' needs are met in a comprehensive way. This segment will help you understand—

- Communication challenges for victims who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- Short- and long-term concerns of victims who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.
- The need for effective collaboration between service providers and the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

1. What communication challenges do victims who are deaf and hard-of-hearing face after victimization?

Facilitator Probes

- Communicating with and receiving help from people who do not understand sign language.
- Verbal communication skills of people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing vary enormously, making it difficult for them to be understood.
- The trauma associated with loss of hearing as a direct result of the crime.

2. What barriers make it difficult for people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing to communicate after being victimized?

Facilitator Probes

- Injuries that may prevent victims who are deaf and hard-of-hearing from using their hands to sign.
- Lack of auxiliary devices to help them communicate.

- The capacity to communicate, which may be influenced by other disabilities.
- Victim assistance providers and other professionals who are unfamiliar with their communication needs.
- First responders who are unresponsive or biased because of preconceived notions about people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.

3. How can you help victims who are deaf and hard-of-hearing overcome barriers?

Facilitator Probes

- Consult with other responders who know sign language.
- Make eye contact and a conscious effort to communicate openly.
- Be sensitive to how victims identify their disability and the best ways to support them.
- Understand the varying degrees of deafness that may affect a victim's ability to communicate or to be understood.
- Speak directly to victims, even if they are accompanied by an interpreter.

4. What immediate difficulties could victims face after a victimization that would be complicated by a lack of hearing and the need to communicate using sign language?

Facilitator Probes

- Inability to cry out and attract the attention of people to come to their assistance and resulting feelings of helplessness and fear.
- TTY lines on 911 calls that are not always accessible from all types of phones and victims who do not know how to use them.
- Difficulty in describing injuries to individuals who are not trained in sign language, particularly when victims are frightened or traumatized.
- Emergency care providers who are not trained to communicate with victims who cannot hear or speak clearly.

5. What are some of the long-term concerns about the criminal justice system that victims who are deaf and hard-of-hearing might have?

Facilitator Probes

- Being able to pay for interpreters to guide them through the criminal justice process. (You can collaborate with county offices of deaf services and not-for-profit organizations to ensure that payment for interpreters is not a burden to victims.)
- Understanding crime victim compensation and other rights that may be complex without assistance from interpreters.
- Providing accurate and complete testimony about a crime to the best of their abilities. (This may require collaboration among victim/witness advocates, prosecutors, county offices of deaf services, and interpreters.)

6. How should you make contact with the deaf and hard-of-hearing population in your community so that victims are aware of their rights and available services?

Facilitator Probes

- Seek assistance from service providers in the deaf and hard-of-hearing community in disseminating information about victims' rights and services.
- Collaborate with county offices of deaf services to provide interpreters, sign language education, and advocacy programs.
- Reach out to clinics and commercial providers of hearing aids that serve people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.
- Reach out to the general community of people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing to explain victims' rights and services.

7. What steps can you take to determine and implement agency goals to improve services to victims who are deaf and hard-of-hearing?

Facilitator Probes

- Define and determine attainability of immediate and short- and long-term objectives. Establish a timeframe to meet those objectives.

- Within the agency—
  - ❑ Assess services, facilities, and availability of assistive devices.
  - ❑ Train staff on needs and concerns of victims who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.
  - ❑ Evaluate the need for further change and determine funding requirements.
- In the professional community—
  - ❑ Conduct outreach to professionals who serve the deaf and hard-of-hearing community and assess the potential for collaboration.
  - ❑ Form partnerships.
  - ❑ Conduct cross training.
- In the community—
  - ❑ Educate the deaf and hard-of-hearing community about victims' rights and the availability of services targeted to individuals who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.
- Evaluate results.

Segment Two: Providing Services to Isolated Crime Victims

Crime victims who live in rural and isolated areas face various challenges in accessing victim services. They may be unaware of their rights and available services or choose not to access them. Issues such as self-reliance, family loyalty, and respect for privacy often discourage victims from reporting crime. Long distances and poor public transportation may inhibit victims from traveling to larger communities to access services. Additionally, some rural and isolated areas are inhabited by American Indians/Alaska Natives and immigrants who are culturally and ethnically diverse. This segment will help you understand—

- Barriers to services that crime victims confront in rural and isolated areas.
- Collaborative initiatives in rural areas that can improve services.

- Factors that can inhibit American Indian/Alaska Native crime victims from accessing services.

1. What are some key challenges faced by crime victims who live in isolated areas?

Facilitator Probes

- Conditions brought on by poverty, including lack of telephones or computers, personal or public transportation, and community resources to promote education about victims' rights and services.
- Long geographical distances to get to police stations, courthouses, shelters, hospitals, and legal aid offices; difficulties in making numerous trips.
- Limited knowledge among criminal justice professionals about victims' rights and needs due to a lack of training.
- Lack of crisis response, local victim services, and shelters.

2. Which cultural factors in isolated areas may determine to whom victims can go for assistance and support?

Facilitator Probes

- Language barriers.
- Cultural mores that underscore gender dominance and sanction abuse of women and children.
- Religious, spiritual, or ethnic leaders as the only source of advice and support in times of crisis.
- Religious, spiritual, or ethnic leaders who potentially diminish the seriousness of being victimized.
- Lack of confidentiality, and the fact that everyone may know one another and their problems.
- Strong family loyalty dynamics, a tradition of "not washing dirty laundry in public," and an unwillingness to identify offenders in the family.

- A deep sense of community and intolerance of outsiders who try to fulfill the role of victim service provider on a part-time basis.
- Modesty and pride that may prevent victims from seeking help from strangers.

3. How is the need for victim services and support generally addressed in isolated areas of the country?

Facilitator Probes

- By victim service providers who cover several jurisdictions, sometimes called "circuit riders."
- Through various forms of technology, including telecommunication and telemedicine.
- Through the clergy and other spiritual leaders in ethnic populations.
- With specific grants from the federal and state governments to provide victim services in rural areas and Indian Country.

4. What kinds of initiatives may improve victim services for people who live in isolated areas?

Facilitator Probes

- Research the cultural fabric of the area to determine the predominant language and dialects, faiths, and means of employment.
- Identify local community leaders and work with them to improve victim services in the outlying regions.
- Develop teams of volunteers who are trained in victim sensitivity, rights, and needs.
- Invite allied professionals to train on victim sensitivity, rights, and needs.
- Form partnerships with existing cultural, agricultural, community, and faith-based organizations to provide victims with appropriate and informed support and referrals to service providers.

- Form service bridges between limited local victim services and service networks in nearby cities or metropolitan areas.
- Ignite the interest of state legislators about victims' needs in isolated areas to secure funding for improved services.

5. When isolated crime victims are American Indians/Alaska Natives, what cultural factors affect the kinds of services with which they may feel comfortable?

Facilitator Probes

- Preference for tribal law over district, state, or federal law.
- Language barriers.
- Communication styles that vary or are in conflict (e.g., many American Indians/Alaska Natives value and are more comfortable with silence).
- Differences in social behavior (e.g., many American Indians/Alaska Natives consider eye contact and strong handshakes invasive).
- Distrust of outsiders, particularly government employees, because of past history of prejudice and unfair treatment.
- Tradition of tolerating adversity (including victimization) that may lead to low reporting of crimes.
- Tradition that values the well-being of the group over the individual.
- Potential of alcohol and substance abuse as previctimization and postvictimization factors (this factor affects victims of all cultures).

6. What steps can you take to determine and implement agency goals to assist victims who live in isolated areas in accessing services?

Facilitator Probes

- Define and determine attainability of immediate and short- and long-term objectives. Establish a timeframe to meet those objectives.

- Within the agency—
  - ❑ Evaluate victims' limitations in accessing services (long-distance travel and communication).
  - ❑ Develop resources to address travel barriers.
  - ❑ Train providers on cultural competency relative to the needs of the population.
  - ❑ Evaluate the need for further change and determine funding requirements.
- In the community—
  - ❑ Identify and contact potential collaborators among community-based organizations and enlist their support.
  - ❑ Contact allied professionals and enlist their support.
  - ❑ Conduct cross training.
  - ❑ Educate isolated populations on victims' rights and availability of services.
  - ❑ Contact local policymakers and enlist their support.
- Evaluate results.

Segment Three: Bringing Hope to Urban Communities

Youth in urban communities with high crime rates often must deal with tough environments in which repeat victimization is common. Families, schools, and communities are critical partners in establishing effective interventions for inner-city youth who have fallen victim to the culture of violence. Special attention should be given to victims of gang violence so they feel safe enough to report their own victimization and can access the support and services they need. This segment will help you understand—

- Factors that contribute to high rates of youth victimization in urban communities.

- Effective intervention strategies for young victims of violence to avoid repeat victimizations.
- Unique challenges posed by gang violence.

1. Which factors contribute to victimization among youth in urban communities that have high crime rates?

Facilitator Probes

- Hostile environments, risky behavior by victims, lack of prevention measures, and the high prevalence of violent victimization.
- Poverty, minimal parental involvement, few or no after-school community resources, and a lack of opportunities to engage in healthy activities.
- Substance abuse and addiction as correlating factors in victimization.
- High prevalence of trafficking in illegal substances, attracting many youth to an "easy" way to make money.
- Gang life and activities that can attract youth and glamorize crime and revenge.
- Marginalization of religious and ethnic groups that might otherwise offer support.

2. What types of interventions might alter young people's attitudes toward violent behavior patterns to reduce future victimization, while supporting their participation in the criminal justice system?

Facilitator Probes

- Immediate support from the moment a youth enters an emergency room with an injury caused by violence.
- Followup assessment of a victim's family to evaluate risk of repeat victimization and a strategy for long-term prevention.
- Counseling for victims and families to better cope with the effects of injuries caused by violence.

- Connecting youth to healthy environments and positive recreational activities in the community.
- Legal assistance to help parents and victims move successfully through the criminal justice system.
- Assistance with obtaining crime victim compensation.
- Assistance from neighborhood watch groups that look out for the safety of youth who have been victimized.
- Assistance with relocation when necessary.

3. What types of community participation may be helpful to address repeat victimization among youth in urban areas?

Facilitator Probes

- Leaders of the clergy and respected members of the neighborhood who mentor at-risk youth and young crime victims and teach them about violence prevention.
- Community members who organize venues that heighten awareness of the needs of young crime victims.
- Concerned parents who volunteer and are trained to respond to the needs of young crime victims.
- School officials and teachers who reach out to youth and their parents about crime and victimization.
- Mental health counselors and hospital social workers who develop protocols that support and care for young crime victims.
- Legal aid volunteers who are taught to effectively assist young crime victims who have no concept of their rights in the criminal justice system.
- Youth clubs and groups that reach out to young crime victims and provide them with out-of-school activities.
- Human resources volunteers from local businesses who develop after-school work programs for young crime victims that include opportunities for employment after graduation.

4. What special challenges do victims of gang violence face?

Facilitator Probes

- Lack of focus in the community on victim services because resources are put toward prevention.
- Resignation in the community that gang violence is a hopeless situation.
- An attitude that young victims of gang violence may have "contributed" to the violence.
- An attitude that young victims of gang violence have previously been perpetrators of violence.
- A distrust of the criminal justice system that makes victims unwilling to report crimes.
- Barriers and biases that stem from differences in culture, race, religion, gender, and sexual preference.
- Longstanding turf issues in the community that local populations tolerate or accept.

5. How can living in a city plagued by gang violence contribute to repeat victimization?

Facilitator Probes

- Inability of young victims and families to relocate, which forces victims to live with or among perpetrators.
- Alienation that leads youth to join gangs and that may also cause victims not to report crimes.
- Fear of enlisting the support of law enforcement and criminal justice professionals.
- Fear of reprisal against victims if they report crimes and against witnesses if they agree to identify offenders or testify in court.

- Neighborhood values that label victims and witnesses who report crimes as traitors to the community.
- Victims, witnesses, and offenders living in the United States illegally who fear deportation or responsibility for the deportation of an offender.

6. What may young victims and witnesses of gang violence need from their victim service providers, the criminal justice system, and the community?

Facilitator Probes

- Agency- and systems-based collaborations with trusted members of the community.
- Crisis lines that are open 24 hours per day.
- User-friendly vertical gang units that include victim assistance; keeping the same criminal justice system personnel throughout a case.
- Systems- and community-based service providers who speak the local languages and dialects.
- Support and outreach extended to families, particularly victims' siblings, who may be threatened by a gang.
- Victim/witness protection protocols at school and in the community.
- Assistance with relocation, when necessary.

7. What steps can you take to determine and implement agency goals to better support urban youth who have fallen victim to the cycle of violence?

Facilitator Probes

- Define and determine attainability of immediate, short-, and long-term objectives. Establish a timeframe to meet those objectives.
- Within the agency—
  - ❑ Develop response protocols that can provide support as soon as a crime is reported.

- ❑ Develop response protocols with families of victims that assess the potential for repeat victimization.
- ❑ Have protocols in place to address the risk of repeat victimization.
- ❑ Develop resources to address language barriers.
- ❑ Train providers on cultural competency relative to the needs of the population.
- ❑ Evaluate the need for further change and determine funding requirements.

- In the community—
  - ❑ Identify and contact potential collaborators among neighborhood-, faith-, community-, and ethnic-based organizations and local businesses and enlist their support.
  - ❑ Contact allied professionals and enlist their support.
  - ❑ Conduct cross training.
  - ❑ Educate ethnic populations on victims' rights and the availability of services.
  - ❑ Contact community leaders and mentors and enlist their support.
- Evaluate results.

Segment Four: Empowering Immigrant Women To Speak Out

Many factors limit access to victim services among immigrant women, including immigration status, fear of deportation, fear of the criminal justice system and its representatives, language barriers, and poverty. Immigrant women are often unaware of their rights within the criminal justice system. Female migrant workers can face additional barriers because they most likely have no long-term residence from which they can access ongoing services. To gain a greater understanding of the needs of immigrant women victims in your community, you must contact community organizations and other groups in your area. This segment will help you understand—

- Sociocultural barriers that prevent immigrant women from accessing services.
- Legal considerations for immigrant women who are crime victims.
- Special concerns of female migrant workers who are immigrants.
- Actions that will improve victim services for immigrant women.

1. Which sociocultural values and barriers inhibit immigrant women from accessing victim services?

Facilitator Probes

- Language barriers.
- Decisions that are made based on the family rather than on personal needs.
- Difficulty reporting a private matter to law enforcement officials because of cultural mores.
- Traditional reliance on male family members to interact with the public.
- Inability to speak openly about sex crimes because of cultural restrictions, values, or stigmas.
- Fear of police as a result of abuse and oppression in their country of origin, as well as in this country.
- Experience of colonial racism in their country of origin and a fear of white power structures.
- Expired work visa, no visa, or other lack of legal status that renders them especially vulnerable to isolation, abuse, or fear of deportation.
- Lack of skills and no source of income if they leave the family to avoid further victimization.
- No knowledge of the rights to which victims are entitled.

2. Of what relevant legal considerations should you be aware when immigrant women are victimized?

Facilitator Probes

- Immigration status and fear of deportation.
- The right of immigrant women to receive victim services.
- Laws concerning domestic violence, human trafficking/enslavement, and exploitation.
- Rights of battered immigrant women under the Battered Immigrant Women Protection Act of 2000.
- T visas created by the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (VTVPA) that give temporary lawful status to immigrants brought into the country for the purposes of sex or labor trafficking.
- U visas created by VTVPA that give temporary lawful status to illegal immigrant women who are victims of many types of crime involving physical and mental abuse.
- Applications for T and U visas, which are submitted to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

3. What additional barriers do female migrant farmworkers who are immigrants face in accessing victim services?

Facilitator Probes

- Poor understanding of social and regulatory systems that may change from state to state (e.g., enforcement of "no contact" orders).
- Lack of ties to the local community.
- Little sense of ownership or entitlement.
- Living at the periphery of the local community where they were harmed.
- Lack of social support and financial resources.

- Difficulty participating in the criminal justice system because of frequent moves.
- Living in remote camps in rural/isolated areas with lack of transportation and communications such as telephones. (See also Segment Two, which focuses on victims in isolated communities.)
- Fear of losing employment/income if they report crimes occurring at their worksite.

4. How can you reach out to immigrant women who are victims?

Facilitator Probes

- Learn state and federal laws that govern treatment of immigrant victims in the criminal justice system.
- Form partnerships with local ICE professionals and learn their protocols concerning crime victims.
- Promote victim sensitivity among ICE professionals who may have to deal with immigrant women who are victims.
- Form relationships with members of immigrant communities and teach them about immigrant victims' rights and the availability of services in the community. These communities include refugee/immigrant rights and other community-based organizations, including faith-based groups within immigrant communities.
- Form partnerships with professionals within refugee service organizations and refugee/immigrant rights organizations.

5. How can you reach out to immigrant women who are migrant farmworkers?

Facilitator Probes

- Identify and learn the languages spoken in the migrant communities or find reliable interpreters.
- Discuss with migrant farmworker communities the availability of services through groups that have the most contact with them, including the clergy, farmworkers' labor rights groups, and immigrant rights organizations.

- Educate at-risk women in migrant farmworker communities to help them recognize that many types of behaviors involving force, sexual harassment, sexual assault, fraud, coercion, and exploitation constitute crime.

- Develop protocols to respond to the needs and concerns of immigrant women who have been battered, and are migrant farmworkers, as they move seasonally through the community.

6. What steps can you take to determine and implement agency goals to better support immigrant women, including migrant workers, when they are victims or are at risk of victimization?

Facilitator Probes

- Define and determine attainability of immediate, short-, and long-term objectives. Establish a timeframe to meet those objectives.

- Within the agency—

  - ❑ Develop protocols to assist illegal immigrants who are afraid of being deported.

  - ❑ Understand the basics of T and U visas. Application is a complex process, so identify local resources equipped to help victims applying for these visas.

  - ❑ Develop protocols to overcome language barriers (e.g., the Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force Complaint Line [1-888-428-7581] has translation services in 150 languages for victims to report crimes by telephone).

  - ❑ Train providers on cultural competency relative to the needs of local immigrant populations.

  - ❑ Evaluate the need for further change and determine funding requirements.

- In the community—

  - ❑ Identify and contact potential collaborators among faith-, community-, and ethnic-based organizations and enlist their support.

- ❑ Contact allied professionals and enlist their support.
- ❑ Conduct cross training.
- ❑ Educate immigrant populations on victims' rights and the availability of services.

- Evaluate results.

Segment Five: Reaching Out to Crime Victims With Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities who are victimized can face a host of difficulties in accessing effective services. Although victims with disabilities have the same needs as other crime victims, they also have specific needs posed by their particular disability, particularly in the areas of communication and access. You should be aware of the common types of disabilities and how they can affect victims' abilities to communicate and acquire the services they need. Asking crime victims with disabilities clearly and directly what they need is one of the best ways you can get that information. Collaboration with service providers who work with individuals with disabilities is essential. (Refer to Segment One for discussion on crime victims who are deaf and hard-of-hearing and how you can help them access needed services.)

This segment will help you understand—

- Special concerns of victims with disabilities in accessing services.
- Unique challenges for victim service providers who are assisting people with disabilities.
- The need for collaboration with representatives of disability groups in the community.

1. What common types of conditions are referred to as disabilities?

Facilitator Probes

- Impairments of sight, hearing, and speech.
- Physical disabilities (e.g., limited use of limbs, loss of limbs).

- Cognitive and developmental disabilities.
- Mental illness.

Note: For more detailed information on these types of disabilities, please refer to *Victims with Disabilities: Collaborative, Multidisciplinary First Response* Trainer's Guide, (NCJ 223940), accessible through OVC's Web site and available for ordering through NCJRS.

2. What kinds of challenges do victims with disabilities face in accessing victim services?

Facilitator Probes

- Having to deal with new and unfamiliar limitations imposed on their lives because of the victimization.
- Knowing where to find services and with whom to talk.
- Communicating their needs.
- Lack of general support in the community and persistent isolation.
- Ongoing emotional and psychological issues magnified by victimization (e.g., depression, sense of helplessness).
- Decreased credibility when their communication skills are affected by physical or cognitive disorders (e.g., law enforcement officers who do not understand what a victim says may disregard or misunderstand her account of the crime).
- Survival priorities (e.g., keeping a job and paying bills) that may take precedence over reporting the crime, accessing services, and participating in the justice system. The perpetrator also may be the care provider, so reporting the crime may result in loss of care. These same providers may also prevent victims from accessing help by removing communication devices, thus further isolating victims.
- Service providers who have minimal experience assisting victims with disabilities.
- Physically or attitudinally inaccessible victim service providers' offices.

3. What communication challenges may victims with disabilities experience?

Facilitator Probes

- Difficulty in describing their victimization, feelings, and needs.
- Reluctance to do anything more than report a crime and get emergency medical assistance.

4. What communication challenges may service providers experience?

Facilitator Probes

- Difficulty in finding sensitive language to discuss the effect of victims' disabilities.
- Difficulty in determining how much assistance victims need in communicating and in taking care not to speak for victims.
- Poor understanding of the "health" of victims and the misconception that they might be ill or "contagious."
- Danger of making referrals to agencies that work with people with disabilities but lack training in victims' rights and needs.
- Danger of unwittingly using the perpetrator to help communicate with the victim (e.g., family member who may be the perpetrator), rather than a third party. A certified legal interpreter who knows criminal justice terms would be preferable.

5. How can you improve communication with victims with disabilities?

Facilitator Probes

- Speak directly to victims with disabilities to determine what they may need and what will make them comfortable.
- Speak directly to victims with disabilities, even if they are accompanied by a third-party assistant or an interpreter.
- Treat victims with disabilities with compassion, dignity, and respect.
- Be receptive to victims' body language and other physical cues.

- Physically assist victims when asked. When in doubt, ask permission before helping.
- Be realistic and specific about victims' possible difficulties in being fully involved in the criminal justice process, and be aware of what challenges they may face and expectations they may have.

6. How can you work effectively with victims with disabilities?

Facilitator Probes

- Collaborate with agencies that serve individuals with various types of disabilities.
- Cross-train to build skills in understanding victims' needs and communicating with victims with specific disabilities.
- Cross-train with agencies that serve people with disabilities to better understand the rights and needs of victims with disabilities.
- Consult with qualified professionals who specialize in a range of disabilities to develop policies and programs to better assist victims.
- Reach out to local disability advocacy organizations and people with disabilities themselves.
- Learn the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act through technical assistance and training.
- Acquire assistive technologies that help victims with disabilities to be informed of their rights and be present and heard at criminal justice hearings.
- Ensure that offices are accessible and comfortable for individuals with disabilities.

7. What steps can you take to determine and implement agency goals to better support victims with disabilities?

Facilitator Probes

- Define and determine attainability of immediate and short- and long-term objectives. Establish a timeframe to meet those objectives.

- Within the agency—
  - ❑ Evaluate the physical and attitudinal accessibility of the agency.
  - ❑ Identify existing assistive technologies within the agency.
  - ❑ Evaluate staff to determine who has experience working with people with disabilities.
  - ❑ Identify training and materials to educate staff on how to work with individuals with different types of disabilities.
  - ❑ Evaluate the need for further change and determine funding requirements.
- In the disability community—
  - ❑ Educate disability populations on victims' rights and the availability of services.
  - ❑ Identify and contact individuals who work with disability communities and enlist their support.
  - ❑ Contact allied professionals who serve disability communities, and enlist their support.
  - ❑ Conduct cross training.
  - ❑ Establish cross-agency emergency response protocols for victims with disabilities.
- Evaluate results.

Segment Six: Providing Services to Victims of Hate and Bias Crimes

Victims of hate and bias crimes have been harmed because of an inherent part of their identity—their religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability—and this poses unique challenges. Fear of repeat victimization becomes a primary concern in the aftermath of a crime because victims cannot stop being targets. Social attitudes that minimize the impact of the crime can hamper a victim's ability to access effective and compassionate services. Collaboration with community

groups and training are effective tools for service providers who serve victims of hate and bias crimes. This section will help you understand—

- Why hate and bias crimes have traditionally been underreported and difficult to prosecute.
- The short- and long-term effects of hate and bias crimes.
- The role of service providers in helping victims of hate and bias crimes.

1. Why are victims of hate and bias crimes an underserved population?

Facilitator Probes

- Victims' fears of drawing attention to themselves or their communities may cause an unwillingness to report a crime or seek services.
- Difficulties in assessing the degree of harassment or intimidation may lead first responders to underestimate the seriousness of hate and bias crimes.
- Law enforcement's difficulties in determining motive in hate and bias crimes can impede the filing of appropriate charges.

2. What are some of the short- and long-term effects of hate and bias crime victimization?

Facilitator Probes

- Fear, distrust, depression, hopelessness, and paranoia over repeat victimizations.
- Outrage for being victimized for qualities that make them who they are.
- Financial loss and destruction of victims' livelihoods.
- Social repercussions that affect victims, their families, and their communities.
- The negative impact on victims' relationships with the larger community.
- Employers' fear that the workplace will become a target for criminal behavior.
- Termination of victims' employment.

3. What can you do to better serve victims of hate and bias crimes?

Facilitator Probes

- Be as nonjudgmental and patient as possible.
- Recognize that victims may be reluctant to reveal the nature of the hate and bias for which they were victimized.
- Address the crimes as victimizations and let victims express any feelings they may have about the nature of the crimes.
- Inform and educate victims about the possibility of pursuing civil remedies.
- Assist victims with securing crime victim compensation.
- Develop a level of trust with the targeted community through community outreach and support.

4. What steps can you take to determine and implement agency goals to better support victims of hate and bias crimes?

Facilitator Probes

- Define and determine attainability of immediate and short- and long-term objectives. Establish a timeframe to meet those objectives.
- Within the agency—
  - ❑ Identify groups in the community that may be victims of hate and bias crimes.
  - ❑ Educate staff on hate and bias crimes and why special laws have been created to prosecute and punish perpetrators.
  - ❑ Conduct bias awareness training and create an open environment in which staff can identify and address personal biases.
  - ❑ Evaluate the need for further change and determine funding requirements.

- In the community—
  - ❑ Educate target populations on victims' rights and the availability of services.
  - ❑ Identify and contact potential collaborators among faith-, community-, and ethnic-based organizations and enlist their support.
  - ❑ Contact allied professionals and enlist their support.
- Evaluate results.

Segment Seven: Reaching Out to Victims of Financial Crimes

Whether it is the loss of a lifetime of savings or the destruction of a credit rating, financial crime creates havoc in victims' lives. People often blame themselves when they have been victims of financial scams and fraud. Older victims who are targets of financial abuse and fraud may fear reprisals from relatives and a loss of independence if the extent of their victimization becomes known. Victims often suffer trauma after a financial victimization in ways similar to victims of violent crime. You should be aware of the effects that financial crime can have on victims and help them access the comprehensive services they need, including outside referrals for financial counseling. This section will help you understand—

- How the impact of financial crime on victims is often minimized.
- The emotional impact of financial victimization.
- The role of service providers in assisting victims of financial crime.

1. Why are victims of financial crime—telemarketing scams, investment fraud, cybercrime, and identity theft—an underserved population?

Facilitator Probes

- Victims of financial crime have fewer rights in the criminal justice process than victims of violent crime.
- Victims of financial crime who are elderly, lonely, or isolated may be unaware that support is available.

- They often are ashamed of their victimization and do not report the crime.
- Victims fear that they may be judged for their perceived greed—after losing out in a financial scam—and do not seek support.
- Few service provider organizations have mandates to assist victims of financial crime.
- Service providers may have little understanding of the often severe emotional impact of financial crime on victims.

2. What are some emotional responses of victims of financial crime?

Facilitator Probes

- Feelings of helplessness to recover losses.
- Self-blame.
- Guilt and shame.
- Disbelief.
- Anger.
- Depression.
- Loss of trust.
- Deteriorating self-esteem.
- Fear for their financial security and independence, especially among older victims.

3. What other factors influence financial crime victims' emotional and psychological well-being following victimization?

Facilitator Probes

- Depletion of finances.
- Family blame for poor judgment; accusations of foolishness and greed.

- Unsympathetic creditors dealing with victims' financial difficulties.
- Embarrassment and humiliation over public disclosure of victimization in the media.
- Losses that are rarely fully recoverable, even when perpetrators are prosecuted and convicted.

4. How can you assist victims in dealing with the impact of financial crimes?

Facilitator Probes

- Provide victims with timely and ongoing information about an investigation.
- Be patient and responsive if victims of financial crime grow frustrated or depressed over lack of progress in their cases.
- Provide victims with referrals for psychological counseling and support.
- Refer victims to consumer advocacy organizations and debt counselors that can help them negotiate the various issues involved in any resulting financial crisis.
- Be aware that some older victims may not fully grasp the seriousness of their situation.
- Ensure that victims complete victim impact statements and that they are filed with the appropriate agency if the cases are prosecuted.
- Be familiar with and follow correct protocols for requesting restitution when state law provides for it.

5. What steps can you take to determine and implement agency goals to better support victims of financial crimes?

Facilitator Probes

- Define and determine attainability of immediate and short- and long-term objectives. Establish a timeframe to meet those objectives.
- Within the agency—
  - Educate staff on common types of financial crime.

- ❑ Compile a list of referrals and hotlines that offer support to victims of financial crime.
- ❑ Evaluate the need for further change and determine funding requirements.

- In the community—
  - ❑ Educate the general population about financial crime and the kinds of support available to victims.
  - ❑ Consult with the mental health community about trauma brought on by financial abuse or fraud.
- Evaluate results.

Additional Resources

Training and Other Specific Guidance

VAT *Online* is a Web-based training program developed by OVC to provide service providers and allied professionals the opportunity to acquire the basic skills and knowledge needed to better assist victims of crime. Lessons of special interest to those interested in learning more about the underserved victim populations in this guide include the following:

Segments One and Five (*The Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Community* and *Victims with Disabilities*), Lesson: "Persons with Disabilities."

Segment Two (*Isolated Crime Victims*), Lessons: "Cultural Competencies"; "Reservation Based Organizations."

Segment Three (*Urban Communities*), Lessons: "Teens"; "Community Based Organizations."

Segment Four (*Immigrant Women*), Lessons: "Cultural Competencies"; "Immigrants and Refugees."

Segment Six (*Hate and Bias Crimes*), Lessons: "Cultural Competencies"; "Hate and Bias"; "Terrorism."

Segment Seven (*Financial Crimes*), Lessons: "Identity Theft"; "Property Crimes."

For more information and to register for free VAT *Online* training, visit the OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center at https://www.ovcttac.gov/trainingCenter/index.cfn.

Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Community

Web Sites

Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services
www.adwas.org

Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center, Gallaudet University
Information for parents of deaf children and professionals who work with them.
http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu

Media Sources for Learning American Sign Language, Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center, Gallaudet University
http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/Clerc_Center/Information_and_Resources/Info_to_Go/Language_and_Literacy/ASL.html

National Association of the Deaf
www.nad.org

National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders
www.nidcd.nih.gov

Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, Inc.
www.rid.org

Publications and Videos

Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services. 1996. *Domestic Violence in the Deaf Community.* Outreach Packet. Seattle, WA: Abused Deaf Women's Advocacy Services.

Merkin, Lewis, and Marilyn J. Smith. 1995. "A Community-Based Model Providing Services for Deaf and Deaf-Blind Victims of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence." *Sexuality and Disability* 13(2): 97–106.

National Association of the Deaf Law Center. 2000. *Communication Access With Police and Law Enforcement.* Silver Spring, MD: National Association

of the Deaf. www.nad.org/issues/justice/police-and-law-enforcement/communication-access

National Institute of Justice. 1997. *The Americans With Disabilities Act: Emergency Response Systems and Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Office for Victims of Crime. 2008. *Promising Practices for Serving Crime Victims With Disabilities Bulletin and Toolkit.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Office for Victims of Crime. 2005. *Serving Crime Victims with Disabilities: The Time Is Now; Meet Us Where We Are.* Set of 2 DVDs. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Office for Victims of Crime. 2009. *Victims with Disabilities: Collaborative, Multidisciplinary First Response.* Trainer's Guide and DVD. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Office for Victims of Crime. 2007. *Victims with Disabilities: The Forensic Interview.* DVD and Discussion Guide. Washington DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Office for Victims of Crime. 2008. *First Response to Victims of Crime.* Guidebook and DVD. See Section II, pp. 13-37. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Zak, Omer. 1999. *Methods of Communication With the Deaf.* www.zak.co.il/deaf-info/old/methods.html

Isolated Crime Victims

Web Sites

National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry
www.nationalgrange.org

National Tribal Justice Resource Center
www.tribalresourcecenter.org/legal

Native American Criminal Justice Resources
http://arapaho.nsuok.edu/~dreveskr/nacjr.html-ssi

Native American Studies Collections, General Native American Bibliographies
www-library.stanford.edu/depts/ssrg/native/nativepm.html

Rural Victimization Project, Institute for Family Violence Studies, Florida State University School of Social Work
http://familyvio.ssw.fsu.edu/rural

Tribal Court Clearinghouse, Tribal Law and Policy Institute
www.tribal-institute.org

Publications and Videos

Alvord, Lori A., and Elizabeth Cohen van Pelt. 1999. *The Scalpel and the Silver Bear: The First Navajo Woman Surgeon Combines Western Medicine and Traditional Healing.* New York, NY: Bantam.

Dickey, Walter J., and Peggy McGarry. 2001. *Community Justice in Rural America: Four Examples and Four Futures.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance.

Frey, Heather E. 2002. *Tribal Court CASA: A Guide to Program Development.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Lena, Eileen M. 2001. *Impact Evaluation of STOP Grant Programs for Reducing Violence Against Women Among Indian Tribes.* Final Report submitted to the National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice. www.ncjrs.org/pdffiles1/nij/grants/186235.pdf

Ogawa, Brian. 1999. *Color of Justice: Culturally Sensitive Treatment of Minority Crime Victims.* 2d ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Office for Victims of Crime. 2006. *Rural Victims Assistance: A Victim/Witness Guide for Rural Prosecutors.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Office for Victims of Crime. 2009. *Victim Services in Rural Law Enforcement.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Office for Victims of Crime. 2006. *Voices of Victims: American Indian Issues and the Tribal and Criminal Justice Systems.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Rural Task Force. 1998. *Report of the Rural Task Force.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs.

Urban Communities

Web Sites

In the Spotlight: Gangs, National Criminal Justice Reference Service
www.ncjrs.gov/spotlight/gangs/Summary.html

National Gang Center
www.nationalgangcenter.gov

Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods
www.icpsr.com/PHDCN

Project Safe Neighborhoods
www.psn.gov

Project Ujima
A community project committed to helping stop the cycle of violent crimes.
www.chw.org/display/PPF/DocID/44327/router.asp

Streetcats Foundation and National Children's Coalition, Violence Prevention Resources
www.child.net/violence.htm

Student Pledge Against Gun Violence
www.pledge.org

Youth Alive
Intervention program based in California.
www.youthalive.org/network

Publications

Community Oriented Policing Services. 2009. *A Parent's Quick Reference Card: Recognizing and Preventing Gang Involvement*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice. Downloadable resource at www.cops.usdoj.gov/files/RIC/Publications/GangsCard_FBI.pdf

Dunn, Michael J. 2002. "Youth Violence Must Be Treated at the Source." *Wisconsin Medical Journal* 101(6): 34–35.

National Gang Center. 2009. *Parents' Guide to Gangs.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice. Available for downloading in English or Spanish at www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Content/Documents/Parents-Guide-to-Gangs

Roysircar, Gargi, Daya S. Sandhu, and Victor Bibbins, Sr., eds. 2003. *Multicultural Competencies: A Guidebook of Practices.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development.

Seymour, Anne. 1996. *Victims of Gang Violence: A New Frontier in Victim Services.* Special Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime.

U.S. Public Health Service. 2001. *Youth Violence: A Report of the Surgeon General.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Immigrant Women

Web Sites

Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development
www.amcdaca.org/amcd/default.cfm

Family Violence Prevention Fund
http://endabuse.org

Immigrant Survivors of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, National Immigration Project
www.nationalimmigrationproject.org/domestic-violence/domvioindex.htm

Immigration Law & Policy, National Immigration Law Center
www.nilc.org/immlawpolicy/obtainlpr/oblpr071.htm

Legal Momentum
www.legalmomentum.org/our-work/immigrant-women-program

National Human Trafficking Resource Center (NHTRC)
http://nhtrc.polarisproject.org

New York Anti-Trafficking Network Information on T and U Visas.
http://ny-anti-trafficking.com/assets/docs/t_visa_manual_3rd_edition_2009.pdf

Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, U.S. Department of State
www.state.gov/g/tip

Southern Poverty Law Center
Supports the rights of immigrant women, including the Esperanza program, a legal initiative, and the Bandana Project, which focuses on the sexual exploitation of women farmworkers.
www.splcenter.org/what-we-do/immigrant-justice/in-this-section/immigrant-women

Trafficking in Persons and Worker Exploitation Task Force, Civil Rights Division, U.S. Department of Justice
www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/tpwetf.htm

Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, H.R. 3244, Public Law 106-386, October 28, 2000
http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=106_cong_bills&docid=f:h3244enr.txt.pdf

Publications and Videos

Civil Rights Division. 2002. *Information for Victims of Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labor.* Brochure. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/wetf/victimsbrochure.pdf

Civil Rights Division. 2002. *Trafficking in Persons: A Guide for Non-Governmental Organizations.* Brochure. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
www.usdoj.gov/crt/crim/wetf/trafficbrochure.pdf

Jang, Deeana L., Leni Marin, and Gail Pendleton, eds. 1997. *Domestic Violence in Immigrant and Refugee Communities: Asserting the Rights of Battered Women.* Rev. 2d ed. San Francisco, CA: Family Violence Prevention Fund.

Office for Victims of Crime. 2008. *Responding to Victims of Human Trafficking.* DVD with Resource Guide. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Ogawa, Brian. 1999. *Color of Justice: Culturally Sensitive Treatment of Minority Crime Victims.* 2d ed. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Orloff, Leslie. 1999. "Offering Culturally Sensitive Services to Battered Immigrant Women." *The Legal Advocate* 2(5): 1, 9.

Rodriguez, Rachel. 2001. *Migrant Health Issues: Domestic Violence Series.* Buda, TX: National Center for Farmworker Health, Inc.

Roysircar, Gargi, Daya S. Sandhu, and Victor Bibbins, Sr., eds. 2003. *Multicultural Competencies: A Guidebook of Practices.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development.

Victims With Disabilities

Web Sites

Administration on Developmental Disabilities, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/add

Brain Injury Association of America
www.biausa.org

Developmental Disabilities, Medline Plus, U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health
www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/developmentaldisabilities.html

Disability, Abuse & Personal Rights Project
www.disability-abuse.com

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities
www.nichcy.org

National Rehabilitation Information Center
www.naric.com

National Spinal Cord Injury Association
www.spinalcord.org

Publications and Videos

Andary, Michael, Anthony Gamboa, Jr., Madhav Kulkarni, Charles Simpkins, John Stilson, Emanuel Tanay, and Donald Vogenthaler. 2002. *Closed Head Injury:*

A Common Complication of Vehicular Crashes. Irving, TX: Mothers Against Drunk Driving.
www.maddfriendsindeed.org/pdf/Closed%20Head%20Injury.pdf

Steinberg, Mary A., and Judith R. Hylton. 1998. *Responding to Maltreatment of Children With Disabilities: A Trainer's Guide*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information.

Tyiska, Cheryl Guidry. 1998. *Working with Victims of Crime with Disabilities*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime.

*Note: See also publications and videos listed for Victims Who Are Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing, p. 58 of this guide.

Victims of Hate and Bias Crimes

Web Sites

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
www.adc.org

Anti-Defamation League
www.adl.org

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
www.thetaskforce.org

Resources for Responding to Hate Crimes
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ovc/help/hbcfts.htm

Publications

Bureau of Justice Assistance. 1997. A *Policymaker's Guide to Hate Crime*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

Training Materials

National Center for Hate Crime Prevention, Education Development Center, Inc. 2000. *Responding to Hate Crime: A Multidisciplinary Curriculum for Law Enforcement and Victim Assistance Professionals*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs
www.ovc.gov/publications/infores/responding/welcome.html

Victims of Financial Crimes

Training and Other Specific Guidance

In addition to the VAT *Online* resources listed on page 53, the following online curriculum is available through the OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center (https://www.ovc.ttac.gov/TrainingCenter/index.cfm): *Identity Theft Victim Assistance Online Training: Supporting Victims' Financial and Emotional Recovery.*

Web Sites

Fighting Back Against Identity Theft, Federal Trade Commission
www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft

Identity Theft Prevention and Survival
www.identitytheft.org

Identity Theft Resource Center
www.idtheftcenter.org

Internet Crime Complaint Center, Federal Bureau of Investigation and National White Collar Crime Center
www.ic3.gov/default.aspx

National Fraud Information Center, National Consumers League
www.fraud.org

National White Collar Crime Center
www.nw3c.org

Senior Crime Prevention Program, Ventura County District Attorney's Office, California
http://da.countyofventura.org/special_prosecutions/victim_services/senior_crime.htm

Publications and Videos

Johnson, Kelly Dedel. 2003. *Financial Crimes Against the Elderly.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. www.cops.usdoj.gov/ric/ResourceDetail.aspx?RID=91

Office for Victims of Crime. 2003. *F.A.S.T.: Financial Abuse Specialist Team.* Video. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice

Substance Abuse and Victimization

Substance Abuse and Victimization

Substance Abuse and Victimization

Substance Abuse and Victimization offers insights into the previctimization and postvictimization correlations between substance abuse and victimization. Use this segment of the DVD to help victims who may turn to drugs or alcohol in the aftermath of crime or whose vulnerability to victimization may have been increased by the use of drugs or alcohol.

This 28-minute video focuses on three areas:

- The relationship between substance abuse and victimization.
- Techniques for helping victim service providers assist victims who abuse drugs or alcohol.
- The importance of collaboration in assisting victims with substance abuse issues.

Much of the information in this section of the discussion guide has been adapted from chapter 7, "Substance Abuse and Victimization," of the *National Victim Assistance Academy Textbook* (National Victim Assistance Academy [NVAA], 2002).

Segment One: Relationship Between Substance Abuse and Victimization

Prevention of and treatment for victimization are often linked to substance abuse issues. The use and abuse of legal or illegal drugs or alcohol preceding a crime may be a correlating factor in a victimization, and some victims use and abuse after a crime as a way to lessen the intensity of the pain or trauma. Research indicates that victims who abuse drugs or alcohol may be at a higher risk for further victimization, causing a cycle of repeat violence that, without intervention, becomes increasingly destructive (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment [CSAT], 1997).

Analysis of young victim populations reveals a strong relationship between violent victimization history, abuse of drugs and alcohol, and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Kilpatrick, Saunders, and Smith, 2003). Moreover, survivors and individuals in supportive relationships with victims who are deeply affected

by the crime (including victim service providers) may turn to drugs or alcohol to dull their feelings of helplessness or vicarious emotional pain. This section will help you understand—

- Substance abuse as a previctimization factor.
- Substance abuse as a postvictimization factor.
- The negative assumptions made in the criminal justice system and society when a victim abuses substances.
- PTSD in the context of criminal victimization.

1. Trauma brought on by victimization causes many victims to turn to substance abuse as a means of coping. What postvictimization factors cause victims to abuse drugs and alcohol?

Facilitator Probes

- Emotional trauma and psychological pain associated with the crime.
- Physical pain resulting from injuries received during a victimization.
- Stress from navigating the criminal justice system or exposure to the media.
- Cycle of violence from which they cannot escape (e.g., domestic violence, child/adolescent abuse).
- Fear of repeat victimization.
- PTSD, including anxiety, insomnia, nightmares, and depression.
- Lack of outlets to talk about victimization when it is kept a secret; shame or fear that prevents victims from discussing it.
- Little memory of childhood victimization and no clear understanding of what caused the harm.
- Expectation by others that victims should "get over" the victimization and "be happy."

- Extreme levels of psychological distress and helplessness after witnessing violence.
- Anger and no way to express it.

2. Substance abuse can increase the likelihood of being victimized. What are some of the correlating factors between excessive use of drugs and alcohol and victimization?

Facilitator Probes

- Poor judgment. Although a crime is never the victim's fault, victims might have made different choices about their whereabouts, with whom they were talking, and how much alcohol and other drugs they were consuming.
- Increased vulnerability to a crime (i.e., victims may be less aware of what is going on around them and less able to protect or extricate themselves from a dangerous situation).
- Increased vulnerability to predators who are more likely to take advantage of individuals who are obviously high on drugs or alcohol.
- Passivity induced by the dulling effects of substance abuse, combined with a fatalistic attitude about crime, which may create resignation that leaves victims vulnerable to repeat victimization.
- Environments in which substance abuse is permitted or encouraged and that may tolerate or attract criminal behavior (e.g., binge drinking and sexual assaults on college campuses).
- Environments in which purchasing illegal drugs is condoned, which may attract other criminal activity.

3. What are some of the assumptions about substance abusers that negatively affect victims in the criminal justice system?

Facilitator Probes

- Law enforcement officers assume victims are not credible.

- Law enforcement officers who respond to domestic violence scenes mistake dangerous behavior for drunken behavior (e.g., they assume that substances have predisposed the individuals to violence and they just need to "sober up").
- Juries presented with victim substance abuse problems may assume their testimony is unreliable.
- Prosecutors may be reluctant to rely on the testimony of a victim who is a substance abuser.
- Courts may mistake domestic violence issues for substance abuse issues and order treatment rather than address the violence.
- Domestic violence shelters may refuse access to women who abuse substances, leaving them at continued risk.

4. What are some of the societal stigmas faced by individuals who abuse substances when they are victims?

Facilitator Probes

- Blame for their own victimization.
- Belief that substance-abusing victims are less deserving of help.
- Cultural stereotyping as drunks and addicts, which could result in a lack of sympathy and care needed to recover from their victimization.
- Attitude that support is a waste of resources until substance abuse ceases, leaving victims without assistance.

5. What symptoms of PTSD might victims experience after a traumatic event?

Facilitator Probes

- Nightmares, flashbacks, and intrusive images.
- Persistent re-experiencing of the event.
- Persistent avoidance of things associated with the event.

- Reduced ability to be close to other people and have loving feelings.
- Persistent episodes of increased anger, difficulty concentrating, and paranoia.
- Clinically significant distress or impaired functioning.
- One month of any of the above symptoms (NVAA, 2002).

6. Crime victims suffering from PTSD may have problems with substance abuse. What factors might affect their health and relationships in a negative way?

Facilitator Probes

- Greater difficulty recovering from trauma; insomnia, lack of concentration, and other PTSD effects that worsen.
- Disruptive personal relationships, intimacy problems, and family conflicts.
- Poor parenting, unresponsiveness to children, and risk of losing custody of children.
- Deterioration of workplace relationships that endangers job stability (NVAA, 2002).

7. How is recovery from PTSD complicated by substance abuse?

Facilitator Probes

- Effectiveness of PTSD treatment is reduced.
- Sleep disturbances may increase.
- The cycle of avoidance and inability to process the trauma-inducing event continue.

Segment Two: Techniques for Assisting Victims Who Abuse Drugs or Alcohol

Chemical or alcohol dependence is a real possibility for anyone who has experienced a traumatic or violent crime. To effectively serve victims of crime who may be experiencing problems with substance abuse, you should have a basic knowledge of the indicators and a list of mental health referrals to share with clients.

Unless specifically trained, do not expect to assume the role of treatment counselor. Presume that clear communication with substance-abusing victims will be difficult until the substance abuse issues are addressed. This section will inform you about—

- Substance abuse indicators and screening techniques to recognize clients' substance abuse problems.
- Ways to communicate to victims that they need substance abuse treatment and how to make appropriate referrals.
- Barriers that adult and adolescent victims may face in receiving treatment.
- Substance abuse issues among victim service providers.

1. What behaviors indicate problems with substance abuse among victim clients?

Facilitator Probes

- Recurrent failure to fulfill a major role or obligation at work, school, or home.
- Use of drugs or alcohol when it is physically hazardous.
- Use of drugs or alcohol that causes legal problems.
- Even more excessive use of drugs or alcohol after having recurrent social or interpersonal problems caused or made worse by substance use.

2. What should you consider in working with clients when substance abuse is a concern?

Facilitator Probes

- Difficulty in intervening with anyone dependent on alcohol or drugs.
- Ways to approach the issue directly (e.g., by asking "You have obviously been through a lot. What are you using to help yourself feel better?").
- Unlikelihood of victims revealing heavy substance abuse.

- Cues taken from questions about marriage, divorce, and job loss.
- Cues taken from complaints about recurrent abdominal pain, elevated blood pressure, gastritis, intermittent insomnia, or irritability.

3. What should you look for in a good referral source for substance abuse?

Facilitator Probes

- A clinician/"substance abuse treatment counselor."
- A clinician who understands trauma that is a result of victimization.
- A clinician who can address and treat substance abuse in the context of victimization.

4. What should you consider when discussing substance abuse with and making referrals for treatment to traumatized victims?

Facilitator Probes

- Times when victims are most open to discuss the abuse so that trusting relationships can be established and maintained.
- How to best identify problems in a kind, rather than diagnostic, way; avoid using facts and statistics.
- Ways to offer positive suggestions to address problems that will avoid upsetting victims.
- Appropriate referrals to competent and accessible treatment providers who have experience with trauma that is a result of victimization.
- An explanation of the Code of Federal Regulations' "Confidentiality of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Patient Records" (42 U.S.C. 290dd-2), which protects information about individuals' diagnosis, treatment, or referral for treatment from being disseminated (CSAT, 2000).
- Confidentiality of the client's condition (according to the law) in all cases.

5. What barriers might you encounter when working with adult victims who have substance abuse problems?

Facilitator Probes

- Finding free or inexpensive treatment providers when financial limitations or lack of health insurance prevents victims from seeking help.
- Finding temporary childcare so that parents can undergo treatment.
- Addressing cultural or social barriers that might prevent victims from seeking direct help for substance abuse.
- Identifying whether victims' partners or family members are substance abusers.

6. What barriers might you encounter when working with adolescent victims who have substance abuse problems?

Facilitator Probes

- Assessing youth's peer group pressure regarding substance abuse.
- Assessing whether history of family violence is a correlating factor.
- Identifying youth in current high-risk situations at home.

7. Victim service providers who suffer vicarious trauma or compassion fatigue may abuse substances as a coping mechanism. How can this best be addressed in a professional environment?

Facilitator Probes

- Create an environment in which self-monitoring is practiced (e.g., assigning a weekly time and framework for staff to review their level of stress and compassion fatigue).
- Create an environment in which seeking help for substance abuse problems is supported.
- Look out for one another in the agency, and intervene when a colleague suffers from vicarious trauma.

- Intervene sensitively when a colleague clearly needs to develop a healthy means to relieve stress.
- Make available a list of referrals that staff or volunteers can access anonymously in case they experience difficulties with substance abuse.

Segment Three: Importance of Collaboration in Assisting Victims With Substance Abuse Issues

You should learn to recognize the basic symptoms of substance abuse and PTSD and have protocols in place to address them. Collaboration with substance abuse treatment experts in the community is essential so that individuals can receive professional care for their victimization and correlating conditions simultaneously. Cultural competency is a second important prerequisite for effective services. Victims with substance abuse problems who come from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds may be less likely or less able to communicate their treatment needs to providers who are not members of their ethnic or cultural group. Faith-based organizations may be a point of entry for victims who abuse substances or suffer from PTSD and can be an effective part of the service provider/treatment specialist collaboration. This section will inform you about—

- Elements of collaboration that will improve services to victims with substance abuse problems.
- Cultural competency in work with victims from diverse cultures who have substance abuse issues.
- Faith-based communities as the first point of contact on substance abuse issues among victims.

1. How can you proactively address victimization and substance abuse issues when they appear together?

Facilitator Probes

- Identify potential partners in the community that address substance abuse and cross-train on substance abuse and victimization.
- Collaborate with partners to develop guidelines and requirements for training victim service personnel.

- Learn the basic interactive effects of trauma, PTSD, and substance abuse.
- Develop rudimentary protocols and screening instruments to identify and assess substance abuse.
- Develop a list of referrals that can be helpful and effective for victims with substance abuse issues.
- Recognize and address negative bias toward substance abusers that might interfere with effective provision of services.
- Promote better understanding in the community of the relationship among victimization, trauma, and substance abuse.

2. Why is cultural competency important in the treatment of victims from diverse cultures who have substance abuse issues?

Facilitator Probes

- Builds trust with victims who often feel marginalized.
- Helps victims overcome their fears of cultural or ethnic bias.
- Avoids misunderstandings that may result from language barriers.
- Includes a better understanding of why some cultural taboos may prevent victims from revealing their substance abuse.

3. How can collaboration with representative cultural or ethnic organizations support victims' substance abuse treatment?

Facilitator Probes

- Helps address victims' possible alienation as a result of cultural and ethnic differences.
- Helps avoid misunderstandings with victims because of cultural or ethnic differences.
- Cultivates support for victims among peers and families.

4. How can collaboration with faith-based organizations improve assistance to victims from diverse cultures who have substance abuse issues?

Facilitator Probes

- Representatives of faith-based communities can initiate dialog and help build trust between victims and victim service providers.
- Interventions through faith-based communities may be the only acceptable means of first contact.
- Faith-based communities are often perceived as nonjudgmental and therefore potentially less likely to stigmatize victims as substance abusers.
- Ethnically and culturally diverse families and relatives may be more likely to refer victims to their spiritual leaders.
- Faith-based organizations can provide safe, comprehensive, and nurturing support networks that also address life-skills training and childcare.

Additional Resources

Training and Other Specific Guidance

VAT *Online* is a Web-based training program developed by OVC to provide service providers and allied professionals the opportunity to acquire the basic skills and knowledge needed to better assist victims of crime. Those interested in learning more about substance abuse and victimization may wish to access the lesson "Substance Abuse."

For more information and to register for *VAT Online* training, visit the OVC Training and Technical Assistance Center (link: https://www.ovcttac.gov/trainingCenter/index.cfn).

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Child and Adolescent Victims and Substance Abuse Resources

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www.wcdvs.com/children/default.asp

Domestic Violence Victims and Substance Abuse Resources

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Prescott, L. 2001. *Consumer/Survivor/Recovering Women: A Guide for Partnerships in Collaboration.* Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment.

Web Sites

National Center for PTSD (Posttraumatic Stress Disorder)
www.ptsd.va.gov

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol & Drug Information
http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/research/studies.aspx

National Criminal Justice Reference Service: Family Violence Resources
www.ncjrs.gov/spotlight/family_violence/Summary.html

National Violence Against Women Prevention Research Center
www.musc.edu/vawprevention

Project Cork Clinical Tools: Ten screening instruments for alcohol and drug abuse, Dartmouth Medical School
www.projectcork.org/clinical_tools

Prototypes
www.prototypes.org

Sidran Institute (traumatic stress education and advocacy)
www.sidran.org

Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/facilitylocatordoc.htm

Women, Co-Occurring Disorders and Violence Study
www.wcdvs.com

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For information on training and technical assistance available from OVC, please contact

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